

REMARKS:

Claims 1, 3, 8, 13, and 20-22 are cancelled, and new claim 23 has been added. Thus, claims 2, 4-7, 9-12, 14-19, and 23 are pending in the application.

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over European Patent Application Publication No. 474,441 to Yamabayashi et al. ("Yamabayashi").

Claims 1, 2, and 4-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,336,986 to Lee et al. ("Lee") in view of Yamabayashi.

Claims 14-19 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Specification Objection:

The Office Action objects to the specification for failing to provide proper antecedent basis for a non-metallic end adaptor. By this Amendment, appropriate correction has been made. No new matter has been added. The amendment to the specification is at least supported by originally-filed claim 3.

Claim Objections:

Claims 14-19 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In response, Applicants have amended claim 14 to include the limitations of independent claim 1 and intervening claims 8 and 13, with the exception the "non-metallic" limitation, which was added to claim 1 by previous amendment. Since claim 14 was indicated as being allowable without this limitation by the previous Office Action dated 16 January 2007, claim 14 is still considered allowable. The remaining claims in this application depend directly or indirectly from amended claim 14. Thus, Applicants submit that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance at least by virtue of their depending from an allowable base claim.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b):

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over European Patent Application Publication No. 474,441 to Yamabayashi et al. ("Yamabayashi"). Claims 1, 2, and 4-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,336,986 to Lee et al. ("Lee") in view of Yamabayashi.

Claims 1, 8, and 13 have been cancelled, so the rejections of these claims are considered moot.

Claims 2, 4-7, and 9-12 depend from allowable claim 14. Thus, Applicants submit that dependent claims 2 4-7, and 9-12 are in condition for allowance at least by virtue of their depending from an allowable base claim.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 2, 4-7, and 9-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn and that claims 2, 4-7, and 9-12 be allowed.

New Claim:

New claim 23 has been added in order to provide a more adequate basis for protection of the invention. No new matter has been added. New claim 23 depends from allowable claim 14. Thus, Applicants submit that claim 23 is in condition for allowance at least by virtue of depending from an allowable base claim.

Conclusion:

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application is considered to be in condition for allowance, and early reconsideration and a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

The undersigned hereby authorizes the Director to charge any fees that may be required, or credit any overpayments, to **Deposit Account No. 502806**. If an extension of time is necessary for allowing the Amendment to be timely filed, this document is to be construed as also constituting a Petition for Extension of Time Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) to the extent necessary. Any fee required for such Petition for Extension of Time should be charged to **Deposit Account No. 502806**.

Please link this application to Customer No. 38441, so that its status may be checked via the PAIR System.

Respectfully submitted,

9/21/2007
Date



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